

MINUTES OF COUNTY CARERS STEERING GROUP

24/01/2006, 11.00AM – 2.30PM

WESTBANK LEAGUE OF FRIENDS, EXMINSTER

Present Sonia B (Chair)
LS
JB
DA
AS
LG
WP
DD
AB
JW
JE
LS
Geoff K
Phil D
Lesley W
Sue W
Helen B

Apologies LM
SH
RC
CW
AM

1. Welcome

- Sonia welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed the group that CW had sent a letter of resignation from her role as the Chair of the West Devon Carers Forum due to personal reasons. It was agreed that a letter of thanks will be sent to her

Action: Geoff King

2. Minutes of last meeting

- LG questioned the use of the word honorarium used in the minutes as this is expenses led where there would be a need to provide receipts. A new title will be considered.
- There was an article in the LMC annual report about carers. There is still a need to engage G.P.'s in a more formal way. The LMC were supportive when Geoff and Debbie met with them.
- Some carers have not found they have been targeted by the flu campaign. Carers are not on the list of people at risk and therefore not in need of the inoculation. The reasons for this could possibly be there is a shortage of the vaccine or/and this is the first year.

- Geoff has an appointment for an informal discussion on 13th March.

3. Locality Issues

4. JE requested if the 'Back Me Up' campaign (what happens in emergency situations – promoted a couple of months ago) could be discussed at the Forum

Action: Sonia to organise this

- AS discussed issues about CSCI (Commission for Social Care Inspection) - carers do not seem to be aware of CSCI and the power they have. Angela wrote to CSCI asking them to promote themselves to carers e.g. in leaflets.

Carers are concerned about the closures of homes in Teignbridge. They are worried that when they feel that they are no longer able to care they will be railroaded into community care when they may feel the person they care for would be better in a home. Domiciliary care will be discussed at the next meeting – this should allay fears about this.

Members of the management team or a representative (sometimes apologies are sent) are not attending locality forums. A letter has been sent to David Johnstone regarding this. Other forums are experiencing similar problems with the Children's Trust are one of the most frequent absentees. Possible reason for this is that they do not know where they 'sit'. Mental health services are another frequent absentee.

Action: Letter from the steering group to be sent to David Johnstone and Anne Whitely informing them of what the forums do and what they are hoping to achieve, pointing out how they are needed in order to operate and the benefits of this networking. To be discussed at meeting with David Johnstone.

Action: the chairs of the locality forums need to send a formal invite to the managers.

It was noted that in Exeter they have only just had the run down of the spending of Children & Families.

Care Direct – some carers feel that they are still not getting the end results they require from this service. It is supposed to be a 'One Stop Shop' and this is not always proving to be the case.

- Exeter Locality Forum are leaving half an hour at the end of the day so carers can 'have their say'.

Items were put forward for the next agenda.

- Zoe Spencer to be invited to listen to concerns – the issues need to come formally from the forum.

Agincare – waiting to change over on to contracts.

Elderly carers with sons/daughters with a learning disability may find this difficult to deal with.

A.M. queried why there was not a standard fee county wide for payments to carers.

Mental health – have local implementation teams.

Mid Devon locality carers forum -

North Devon are not getting an invitation to this meeting.

Action: Write to Denise to ask how they fit in.

Many concerns regarding services being wiped out. E.g. there is no respite for children at Meadow Park and when they move on from Honeylands they may have to go to Torbay. This does not 'marry' up with the Equal Opportunities Act.
Action: Locality Forums to bring to Anne Whitely and raised at County Carers Forum.

5. County Carers Forum

- 13th March, The Cedars Barnstaple (NB not Civic Centre as quoted at the meeting)
- Agenda – questions from local forums to be brought forward.
- Make David Johnstone aware that the carers have a lot of gripes with the Carers. From 1st April 2006 there will be two new directorates – Adult Social Care and Children and Young People therefore an invitation should be sent to Anne Whitely to attend. Questions should be raised as to how it is going to be managed where they cross over – i.e. family centred approach.
- There needs to be a common format for Carers Chairs to give feedback at the Forum. Reports should be distributed with minutes and there should be an opportunity for questions to be asked. Geoff to do a pro-forma. Pro forma to be sent out with the agenda and returned prior to the meeting.
- Carer Chairs to meet up half an hour before the start of the meeting to 'catch up'.

6. Involvement Framework

- Carer chairs had a meeting with an independent facilitator. Issues arising –
 - i. Election tenure -
How long is it, how should they be elected, should there be chairs and vice chairs or joint chairs.
Presently they are selected on an ad hoc basis throughout the county by their locality forums. The system needs to be formalised.
 - ii. Geoff apologised to the chairs for allowing minutes of the Carer Chairs to be distributed to the development workers without their permission. The apology was accepted.
 - iii. Length of tenure – one year is not enough as during the first year there is a learning curve therefore the first 'year' will be extended to two years.
 - iv. If the chair wants to be re-elected after two years this is OK but no pressure should be put on to do so.
 - v. Elections should be done through the locality forums on a more formal basis. There should be information packs for Carers Chairs so new chairs would understand their roles/expectations of them. Current chairs to put their ideas forward as to the contents of this pack. Packs should be ready by October and training in place.

- vi. Joint chairs vs. joint & vice chairs – it was decided that **the choice would be made locally. It was decided to pay chair/vice chair £750 and £250 respectively and joint chairs £500 each and if just a chair £750.**
- vii. Elections across the area will not take place at the same time.
- viii. All management groups have been asked for £1000 per year.
- ix. Payment for current chairs – each district should have enough money so they can be paid for this year.
- x. Guidance needed re mechanics of election.
- xi. All members of the carers link are entitled to have a vote.
- xii. Signature needed to say you are willing to take on the role of chair if elected.
- xiii. Forthcoming elections should be highlighted at the penultimate forum before each election as with newsletters. Nominations slips should be sent out three months before election and advice slip with spiel at the last meeting before election.

- It was felt that the steering group was top heavy with people from the statutory sector. When the group was set up, Phil, Sue and Lesley were not part of the group. It was discussed whether for future meetings they will just be invited to attend if there is an issue pertinent to them or if one should attend a meeting and share the information with the others. It was put to vote and it was agreed that one of them will attend the meeting in future.
- Payment to chairs/vice chairs. Discussion around whether it should be called a reimbursement or honorarium. It will be a one off payment to cover expenses e.g. printer paper, telephone (not mileage/respite – these are covered separately). The voluntary sector needs to make the payments not the bureaucracy so that the tax department do not need to be informed. Exeter and East Devon have agreed to this.
- Status of ex carers – can be a carer chair up to **one** year after having been a carer.
- Minority and hard to reach groups.
 - Some thought is needed about how to reach these groups.
 - If we were externally audited we would not fair well.
 - The issue needs to be highlighted at the management groups.
 - In Hertfordshire – a Beacon Authority – they have appointed someone who follows up any contact with ethnic minorities and questions asked regarding their experiences.
 - It was agreed that if there is the money then this piece of work needs to be looked at and the management group needs to look at this too.
 - Need to get people who work with minority groups to include carers on their agenda.
 - Need to review the involvement framework. Now would be a good time due to changes in structure of the PCT's/SS.

7. Provision of personal care. Lynsey was querying the 'leaked memo' regarding cuts to personal care services.

- Geoff was not able to make a statement on this.
- Questions to senior management at next County Forum.
- Fair access to care – if an element is required at home then it will be looked at in the criteria – however this does not seem to happen in reality.

Action: Lynsey to put forward the question.

8. AOB

- Sue White – passed around draft updates of reviewing assessment tool. So far there has been collective support to this. 250 carers have taken part in the consultation. Sue asked if she could now take the document to the management group and it was agreed.
- Rural carers – money available from April 1st 2006 for two years (to be confirmed). Issues to be looked at – social isolation and limited access to employment.

Date of next steering group – 16th May 2006.